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Statement submitted by Centre Européen de Recherche et de Prospective Politique-CEREPPOL, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Sustainable integration of women through welfare policies promoting effective equality at all stages

In view of the importance of this issue for the 2019 Program of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the enforcement of women's social access to welfare systems of protection in the world is a fundamental step forward in building non-linear bridges among models of perception about their multi-faceted roles. As an example, the impact of Europeanisation has brought about, respectively, increasing incentives to social convergence between European Union States on that topic. Of course, this has not solved the issue of gender inequality in other related areas (work, employment, access to highly qualified jobs), although it has improved it by enlightening women's and girls' integration in the whole society. In Europe, the convergence of the policy vision has made things changed and it has shaken minds.

The European experience over the last 15 years in social recognition and protection of women shows that Welfare regimes are structured around a particular organizing principle. Individual empowerment (Liberal Anglo-Saxon), statist egalitarianism (Social-Democratic Nordic) or institutional partnership (Corporatist Continental) could be singled out as core tenets in the cases of the three well-known welfare pillars of the European Union Society. Looking at the global solidarity pattern, there are countries where families (and family ties) are fairly "strong", whereas in others it is "weak". Both Central and Northern Europe are characterized by weak family links, and the Mediterranean region by strong family ties. According to this opinion, differences have deep historical roots and this has also a decisive input in all social-policy making when referring to the existing social protection systems for women.

In this regard, South European welfare is characterized by the central role played by the family and its interpenetration in all areas of welfare production and distribution, particularly as regards income and services. The interaction mode by the family with the State and many public bodies, on the one hand, and the institutions of the civil society, on the other hand, has made available a strong household micro-solidarity and this has changed social relations and social categories on the long term. In North European countries, the family does not assume this role. The family is one of the domains where the greatest changes have taken place over recent generations. The roles of men and women have globally changed with women in most European countries enjoying roughly the same educational opportunities as men. Within the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, family policy constitutes an important component of the welfare state policies.

These countries are known for their extensive support for families with children through policies aiming to reconcile work and family life, to share paid and unpaid work more equally between men and women, and to provide solutions that reflect the interest of the child in relation with the interest of mothers. Finally, welfare-policies in these countries help to re-distribute economic resources and in this way alleviate child poverty and promote women's equal access to public services.

Today, in many families from Southern to Northern Europe the role of women is still pivotal, as they often cared for children or older relatives at the cost of erratic careers or full withdrawal from the labour market. In the last two decades, women have been assuming a role of "super-powered-women" in the household without enjoying any Return on Investment for her "free" non-economic status. This means that female activity in the formal labour market is not accompanied by a decrease in their

responsibilities within the household, and these combined statuses have an effective impact on wellness, on mental-health.

Despite the adjustments needed to ensure maximum effectiveness, the European Union countries are converging to a single goal: they are setting-up new policy trajectories aiming to provide basic floors of welfare entitlements and rights to all citizens, even for women and girls. In the last 10 years, the European Union countries have protected refugees and asylum-seekers, especially women and children, from all forms of abuse, neglect, and to do so they have integrated public policies for family support in their global governance.

In line with the 2019 topic of the ad hoc Commission, and before embarking on an investigation of social protection policies for women, let's give a definition of welfare protection for women in the 21st Century. Such a protection may include family policy directly aimed at families with children, as well as services such as childcare, leave schemes, and income benefits such as family allowances. It would also address health care, labour market and social assistance policies, etc., that affect family life and children's opportunities later in life.

The search for gender equality has been a fundamental element in the development of the Scandinavian and Nordic welfare state, for example. In fact, the Scandinavian welfare model is often praised for having achieved the so-called "dual earner-dual career" model, in providing for a gender model where men and women benefit from a (more) equal degree share paid and unpaid work. Maybe this model could be implemented to comply with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals and meet the goals of gender equality and social protection for women?

In the field of equal access to opportunities and social protection, a number of interpretive-keys can be evoked at the occasion of the 63 The Commission on the Status of Women Conference to move forward on a high priority issue on women at an International level. Maybe these elements can be the basis of a renewed dialogue on harmonized system of protection?

In many countries, the option of a cash-for care benefit after parental leave is almost non-existent, or subject to incorrect or inappropriate use. However, this "option" creates, in countries where it is implemented, equality between parents who make use of state-subsidized childcare and those who care for their child at home. Because of its "institutional" nature, can it be possible to take this action at an international level?

In some other countries, women's social protection may consist in setting up measures centred on co-parenting ideals, and joint legal custody so that to emphasize the gender equality pattern. It may also consist in maintaining a higher degree of autonomy for single-parent families, by allowing single mothers incentives to keep their children (Boys and Girls) away from poverty.

Obviously, by developing or accepting gender-egalitarian attitudes in our global society, women's access to social protection systems will be emphasized through the entry into force of the concept of "best interest for Women and Girls" in the International Legislation. This supposes that all the transactions within the family unit are as with the ultimate goal of fostering and encouraging women's contentment, security, mental health, and emotional development in private/public circles.

Our international Organization stresses the Commission on the Status of Women and States parties to consider our proposal. The importance to give a pragmatic pattern to the notion of "best interest of Women" (already quoted earlier) would be a sign. Mindsets could move beyond traditional paradigms on women and foster equal identity between women and men. We thank the Commission on the Status of Women for its commitments full of common sense.